1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

bone of the old Native Administration, to be superseded and pushed aside by ambitious and often unscrupulous upstarts who bid for these minor posts before the Chief in whose patronage they lie; the almost inevitable result is that, having obtained the office, they are induced to regard it chiefly as a means of enabling them to recoup themselves for the expenses which they have incurred in securing the post.

The Family Compounds: These are round, flat-roofed, scattered, and, as far as I could see, in other respects similar to those already described.[1]

The Ten'dan': Among the Talense an investigation into the former status and rights of this official resulted in the confirmation of the answers already given to similar enquiries made elsewhere.[1] The following notes may therefore be regarded as supplementary to what has previously been written concerning these individuals, and as being, for the main part, applicable to *Ten'dama* in general, and not only among the Talense.

Duties of Ten'dan': (*a*) He takes a certain part in funeral customs; this will be dealt with under that heading. (*b*) He purifies the land from defilement of blood. 'The Earth does not wish any one to die, except God's death (*Yin-ku*); *kun kpemere*, a violent death, is a taboo of the land (*tey*), so if any one fights and spills blood on the land, it has to be purified (*man tey*). The one who causes the wound has to bring a fowl and a goat, if a person was actually killed, and a cow for the Chief. The sacrifice is made at the compound of the *Ten'dan'*, not where the blood fell. I will assemble all my people and send to tell the Chief that I am purifying the land. If those who had shed the blood were from the Chief's compound, he will send representatives, not otherwise. If the guilty person refuses to purify the land, I will speak and he will die. Even if I do not speak, the land will fight him, that is, permit a snake to bite him or give him head-ache or belly-ache.'

Words Spoken at the Ceremony: 'I will call my father and say: "Listen, they fight on your land, and give head wounds, and blood comes forth. Blood flowed and wet you, so they have brought flour, fowls, and a goat to give you." When I have spoken thus, I make the sacrifice on a heap of soil which I scrape together.'

If any one raises the war cry *kab tagulk* (Nankane, *kasega*) without a cause, he must sacrifice to the land. If any one sells another person, he must purify the land, giving a cow or sheep. 'The land owns the people, that is why a sacrifice is made to her.'

Purification of the Land when Some One is Sold: When a person sells

[1] [The sections of the source containing this material were not processed.--Analyst]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

342
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FIG. 86. A Kusase compound

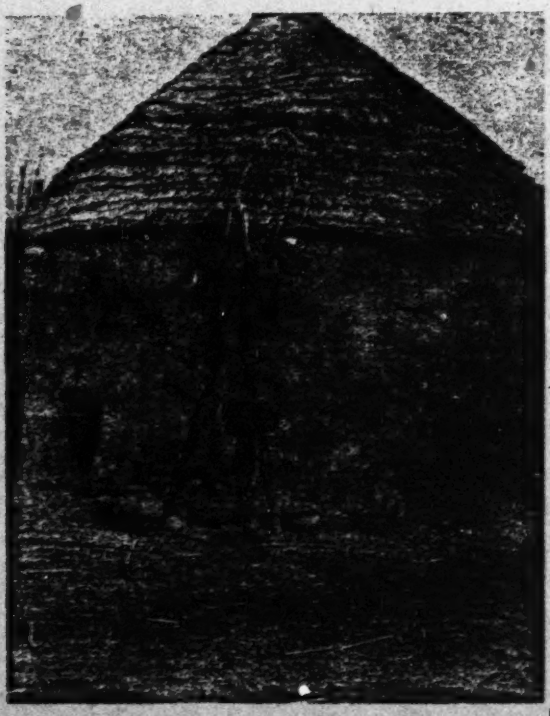

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FIG. 87. The zoy hut. Note cross above doorway

[FACING p. 380]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

751 778 the doorway of the *zɔŋ* hut stands a post with a large stone on top, and a long stick, bent in the shape of a butterfly net and bound round with leaves. 'I tie up the lightning with this', said my informant. On [515] the ground near the stick is a pot containing 'roots' in a decoction in which the inmates of the compound bathe. 'I also use this *sa-bagr* (lightning shrine) to bring rain, only the lightning I tie.'

778 769 All the above may be seen in Fig. 87. On the left of this doorway is a shrine (*ba bagr*) of the spirit 'of the owner of the compound' (an ancestor?) with a cow horn the remains of a past sacrifice hanging on the hut wall above it. To the left of this again is another shrine, that of the 'owner's' mother. Resting on the *ba-bagr* is a pot, called a *ba' bugr*. 'This pot is the shrine of spirits once served by my father and my elder brother. I brought some earth from it (a *bagr*?) and put it in the pot, so I now say when sacrificing, "My father receive these offerings and give to your *bugr*", instead of saying, "My father receive and give to your father". I own my grandfather's *Wen* (Nankane *Ŷini*), it can descend (on my death) to whoever he (the spirit) names, but the spirit of our ancestor always goes to the eldest.'

351 343 [534] 342 Passing now through the main entrance, between two grass-roofed huts, one of which is the *zɔŋ*, the other called *nos dog* (fowl house), we enter the *zan-pak* (cattle-kraal). The cattle in this case were in charge of Fulani herdsmen who were paid by being given the milk. Inside this yard were two other huts, one for goats and sheep, and one for a horse. Surrounding this yard were four suites of rooms called *dog* (compare Nankane *deo*, pl. *detto*). These *dog* were those of:

(*a*) *Ŷi-dan's* wife.
(*b*) An unmarried son of the *Ŷi-dan*.
(*c*) The wife of the *Ŷi-dan's* younger brother.
(*d*) *Dog* of another of *Ŷi-dan's* wives.

351 342 778 755 Inside the main yard is a hut with two doors opposite each other called *zon-tug* (lit. pass straight through), where the women sit. The second doorway of this hut leads right into the yard (*zak*) of one of the *dog* (suites) in which is a shrine called *meŋ Wen* (lit. one's own God), a stone let into a circular mud mound. Beside this shrine is a pot full of roots, called *dendeuk duk* or chameleon's pot. 'I saw two chameleons one day copulating. I was told this is a forbidden thing, so I went to one who had medicine for this and he told me to bring roots. When a child is born to me, I bathe it with water from the roots. Before the *baa* (soothsayer) told me to do this, my children used to die.'

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

In a corner beside this *wen bay* is another lightning protector, a long stick with one end bent into a hoop, also a pot containing roots. 'When the rain does not fall, I sacrifice to it, saying, "God and the land, I want to beg water, because corn, beans, and other grain are withering." When it does rain, the person who made the sacrifice has to stand here in the rain for some time and not go into the room. The bent stick is for tying the lightning. Before this sacrifice is made, and before the rain is called, the one who is about to do so, bathes with water in which the roots in the pot are soaked.' This particular *dog*, which is that of the senior wife, contained the following huts:

(*a*) A small hut for boys, sons of the *Yi-dan* called *bis dog* (boys' room).
(*b*) The hut of the senior wife of the *Yi-dan*.
(*c*) A kitchen (*daan*), *daana* in Nankane, unroofed, but behind it is another kitchen, roofed, used in the wet season.

Each *dog* is identical in construction; a sleeping-room, and a dry- and wet-season kitchen surrounded by its own private yard. In the centre of all these women's quarters is a square hut, called *yi-dan-dog* where the head of the compound sleeps. Joined on to the above compound, but with a separate entrance, is another compound, a replica of the first. It is that of the eldest son of the *Yi-dan*. Among the Kusase, as among the Nankanse, an eldest son may 'go out', that is go away and build a new homestead some hundred yards or more from that of his father, or he may have his home adjoining that of his parent but with a separate entrance. The son in this case had done the latter. He possessed his own *Wen bay* (*Yini* in Nankane), not a large flat-topped circular shrine like his father's, but just a small earth mound. This son's compound contained three yards, each containing one living hut and two kitchens. He had a separate grain-store independently of his father. Among the Kusase these grain-stores are not inside, but outside the compounds, differing in this respect from the Nankanse.

The *zɔŋ* hut, already mentioned, also contained the 'medicine pot', set by his slayer, for the spirit of a man who has been murdered or killed in war. This shrine, after the death of its original owner, will be kept in the *zɔŋ* hut (compare the Nankane *tobega*). The following is a description of this custom among the Kusase.

'When one man kills another, he has to get a *yur* (pot). This pot he will "set" and bathe with the medicine which it contains for

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PLATE II [facing p. 17]

177
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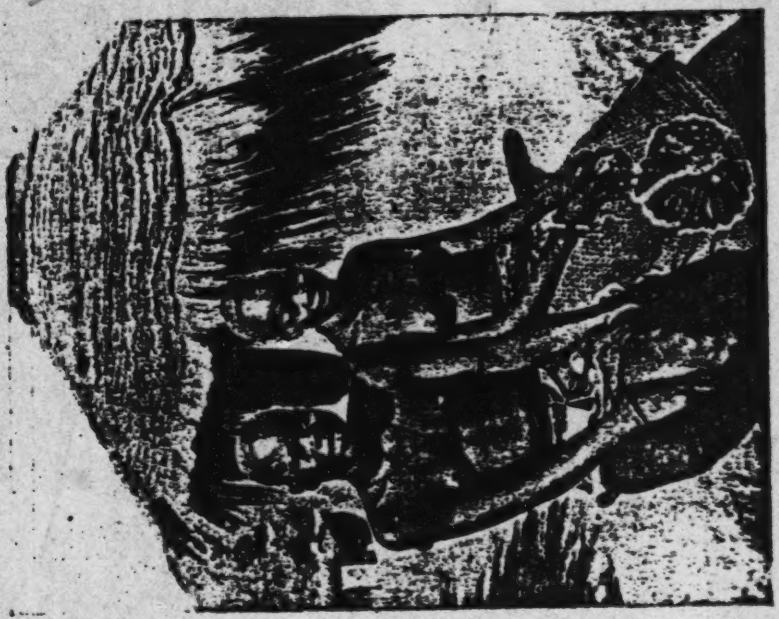
142



(b) A pair of marriageable maidens dressed up for a visit to the market.

142

(a) A Tale grandmother.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the former; and Biuŋ, with 25 homesteads and less than 400 inhabitants, is a peripheral settlement of the same type as Datɔk, which has over 600 homesteads and between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants. The whole of Biuŋ can be seen from one of the hummocks on which it stands, but it takes an hour's ride on horseback to get round the whole of Datɔk.

The density and distribution of habitation varies somewhat from one part of the country to another. The broad undulating plain on the north side of the Tong Hills permits of dense settlement, whereas the plain stretching south and south-east of the hills carries a relatively sparse population.[1]

Differences of altitude and of drainage probably explain this. During the rains a large part of the southern plain becomes too waterlogged for cultivation or for human habitation. Many of the Hill Talis went to live there when they were dispersed in 1911.[2] Though they have always cultivated bush farms there, wherever the lie of the land is suitable, they look back on their exile as a doubly miserable interlude on account of the uncomfortable and unhealthy conditions in which they had perforce to live. Accustomed to their well-drained hills, they hated the interminable swamp, as it seemed to them, into which the plain is transformed during the rains; and hardened though they are, they found the mosquitoes and other noxious insects that swarm there during this season an intolerable plague.

From the top of the Tong Hills, looking northwards, one has a view of what seems to be an endless plain, dotted meagrely with trees, and studded closely, as far as the eye can reach, with homesteads. They are identical in appearance, squat, circular, drab-grey or red, like the soil itself, mostly thatch-roofed, and seem to be scattered indiscriminately, some close together, others farther apart. There is nothing to indicate where one settlement ends and the next begins. Homesteads here, in the old settlements, are often no more than 20 yards apart.

The density of population is greater in the old than in the new settlements, and greater in the vicinity of the Tong Hills than in settlements nearer to the periphery. I cannot state how great the difference is, as I had neither the time nor the training for a comprehensive demographic survey. Sociological observation suggests that the amount of arable land available is an important factor, though not the only one, determining density of population in the older areas of settlement. This is as one would expect of a sedentary population of subsistence farmers. In the new settlements there is ample land, and men have large home farms immediately adjoining their homesteads, which are therefore often as

[1] I have no exact figures. From the statistics given in the census of 1931 (*Appendices containing Comparative Returns and General Statistics of the 1931 Census, Gold Coast*, Government Printer, 1932) it appears that the large area lying between Pwalɛg (Kpolɛg), the centre of the Tong Hills, and a straight line from there to the Red and White Volta—that is, this southern plain—had about 5,000 inhabitants in 1931, only one-seventh of the total population of Taleland. This included many people who were then in exile and now live on and around the Tong Hills.

[2] By order of the British Administration, after the punitive expedition against them. Cf. p. 12 above.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

gradually with the passage of generations in adjustment to changing social boundaries.

It is significant how frequently in settlements like Tongo tɛndaanas' boundaries are adjusted to cognatic ties between a particular tɛndaana's clan and a segment of the immigrant clan. In Tongo all Dekpiɛŋ, barring two or three homesteads, is on Zubiuŋ land; there is not one segment of Dekpiɛŋ that has no cognatic or affinal ties with Zubiuŋ. The few men who live on Gbizug land are all matrilateral kin of Gbizug. All Kuorəg is on Soog land; and the Kuorəg tradition is that one of their ancestors was a Soog *ahəŋ* (sister's son) who was granted land to settle on by his *ahɔb* (maternal uncle), the Soog tɛndaana. Similarly, Lebhtiis yidɛm of Puhug call themselves the classificatory sister's sons of Gbizug, and most of them live on Gbizug land. This is a further indication that the ill-defined boundaries of tɛndaanas' *tɛ́ɛ* are shaped by social relationships.

Not all Namoos live on land under the ritual jurisdiction of other clans. The Chief of Biuŋ, though a Namoo, is also the tɛndaana of Biuŋ. The people of Dkoog live on land under their own tɛndaana, a member of their own clan. They have both a chief and a tɛndaana.[1] In these cases the natives maintain that the original settlers of their clan found no one living there. Being Namoos they brought the chiefship with them, or, as at Biuŋ, held the chiefly rights over the bush out of which Biuŋ has been carved. But the Earth cannot go unworshipped where men dwell; so they undertook the tɛndaanaship themselves.

A tɛndaana's *tɛ́ɛ* is the area in which he exercises priestly duties and responsibilities and the rights and privileges that correspond to them. It is primarily on behalf of the people dwelling or farming there that he constantly consults diviners to find out what sacrifices he must offer in order that the Earth may bless the strivings of men. Lost and unclaimed property or objects found anywhere on his *tɛ́ɛ* must be delivered to him, to be used by him or sacrificed to the Earth. If anybody wishes to build a house on a virgin site, even on farm-land belonging to his own lineage, the blessing of the Earth is essential if the house is to prosper. Therefore the tɛndaana of that *tɛ́ɛ* must come and 'clear the house-site (*kuo yir*)' ritually for the family, receiving, in return, only certain prescribed portions of the meat of the animals sacrificed. If a new grave has to be dug, the tɛndaana, or someone deputizing for him, has to mark it out ritually (*kyieb*) and supervise the digging. This is not only because the dead are laid to rest inside the earth, but also because interring the dead is an act of crucial social and personal importance, charged with ritual meanings of great intensity. It is one of the points at which man's life and the mystical powers of the Earth come into contact in a way that is fraught with the deepest affective and social meaning for the individual and wide consequences for the organization of the society. Thereafter,

[1] But, characteristically, the tɛndaanaship is vested in one segment only of the clan, and that segment is prohibited from holding the chiefship. Moreover, their right to the tɛndaanaship and their exclusion from the chiefship are both validated by their lineage status. They form an attached lineage claiming matrilateral descent from a lineage of Wakii that has the tɛndaanaship. The chiefship is confined to the authentic lineages of Dkoog. Thus the polar relation of chiefship and tɛndaanaship asserts itself within the clan.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

lineage. The latter grows directly out of the former and very often occupies the same dwelling as, or one close to that of, the former. For a woman marriage signifies a sharp break. As wife and mother she generally lives in a different, even if familiarly close, clan settlement from that of her birth. A man, living all his life side by side with the other members of his lineage, participating in the hierarchy of the corporate units that make up the lineage system, identifying himself with all its members through their common jural, economic, and ceremonial interests, makes an easy, self-evident, and gradual transition from the status of a minor (*tarəm*) under his father's control to that of a father and head of a household. The change in status and social role from that of a daughter and member of one lineage to that of a wife and mother in the settlement of another is more drastic and complex. A woman has no rights in or ties with the community[1] in which she spends the greatest part of her life, exercises her heaviest responsibilities, achieves her most cherished fulfilment, and acquires her strongest emotional attachments, except through her family by marriage, her husband, and her children. Thus a woman's life is fraught with many possibilities of conflict between the loyalties and sentiments towards her natal lineage and those which she gradually builds up in relation to her husband's lineage.

The effect of all this is to make the home of even greater importance for a woman than for a man. Her conjugal home is the supreme and almost the sole domain of her labour and life. Her children are the very hub of her existence. She is first and foremost a housewife and mother, toiling devotedly in the care of her children, in attending to her husband's needs, in giving her contribution of labour and skill to the economy of the household, and in the numerous household tasks that call for daily attention.

The Architecture of the Homestead in Relation to the Structure of the Domestic Family

Tale homesteads are solidly constructed of pile (puddled mud, *tan*), and they are built to last. Erecting the circular walls tier by tier, plastering them, roofing the rooms, stamping the floors, adding the small contrivances and the decorations that increase the comfort and attraction of the homestead, are all tasks requiring considerable skill, care, and co-operation. They are not the work of specialists, though some men and women have more skill in them than others, and many people have such poor skill that they never undertake them. The conventional division of labour involves both sexes equally in the building of a homestead. Building and thatching is men's work; plastering, drawing the crude lines and geometrical designs that

[1] She may, and usually does, have cognatic kinsfolk there, but her ties with them are valid only for the particular individuals.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

decorate the walls, and stamping the floors into smooth, hard surfaces are all women's work. According to its size and the number of workers available, from the commencement to the final touches, it takes from three weeks to two months of intermittent but often strenuous labour to build a homestead. This falls chiefly on its future occupants. All the members of the family, including the children, lend a hand. But co-members of the owner's clan, especially of his own local segment and their wives, as well as kinsmen, affines, and friends, lend their services too, and this involves considerable expenditure of foodstuffs to reward them.

Again, substantial as they are, Tale houses are not impervious to the weather, with its drastic alternation of great heat and drought and heavy rains. After a couple of years the soaking rains of July and August begin to wear the walls away, rot the thatch, and pit the floors. A man who wants to keep his homestead in trim condition must do some repairs every dry season. New rooms may be added from time to time, if the family grows in numbers, or old rooms allowed to fall in if it diminishes. With such alterations and repairs, a homestead may stand for a generation. In the older settlements many sites have been occupied for two or three generations continuously, the homesteads having been completely rebuilt, bit by bit, several times during this period.

Building a new homestead is an outstanding event in the life of its owner and a matter of public attention. It always marks a significant change in a man's status—his economic and jural emancipation from minority, or his attainment of eldership high up in the lineage hierarchy. Hence it requires moral sanction and ritual precautions. As we have seen, it also mobilizes all the basic social ties a man has. The house itself, embodying the labour and care of himself, his family, and many of his relatives by blood and marriage, stands as a monument to the efficacy of these social ties.

We can see why the Tale homestead, looked at merely from the architectural aspect, is the material projection of the social relations that make up the domestic family. All Tale homesteads have the same architectural pattern, just as all Tale domestic families have the same basic structure. Only in one point of style and construction do Tale homesteads differ in type, and this is not a question of taste. The Tallensi have two kinds of roofs, a conical thatched roof lashed on to a frame of rafters, and a flat roof of beaten pile supported on a ceiling of strong rafters. The thatch roof is the easier to make and the most common. But nearly every thatched homestead has at least one flat-roofed room (*pii*), as a matter both of convention and of utility. It is the scene of many activities in the dry season. Men, women, and children sit or sprawl on the roof to rest, to chat, or when they are busy with some sedentary task such as sewing or spinning. Grain, vegetables, and edible leaves are spread out to dry there. On

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PLATE 3

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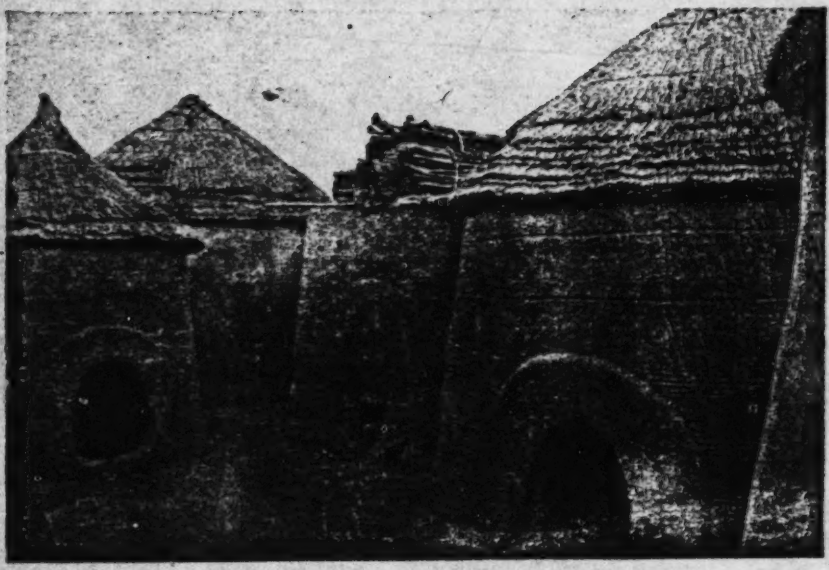

a. Interior of a woman's *Dug*. The rooms from right to left are: a store-room (*Da'yboog*), a dry season kitchen (*Da'ay*), and a small *Dakir* for the woman's young son and daughter-in-law. The woman's own sleeping-room (*Dakir*) is farther to the right, not visible. Note how clean and bare the *Dendɔŋo* is and note, also, the bundles of dry guinea-corn stalks on top of the open kitchen. These have been saved for fuel in the rainy season

342
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b. The homestead of a maximal lineage head, the Gbizug Tendaana. Note the ancestor shrines in front of the gateway (X)

[facing p. 48]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

ingress of wild animals—in particular, the ubiquitous and thievish hyena, which prowls the settlements at night in search of offal and unprotected small stock—and the egress of their own livestock. Every gateway in Taleland must be barred at night, except that of the Chief of Tongo. This is a strict rule, and it is one of the conventions defining the social personality of the Chief of Tongo. It is also a sign of the privacy of the domestic unit in respect of the intimate life of its members.

Entering the *zanɔr* of a homestead, the visitor finds himself in the *sapak* or *nayaŋ*, the cattle-yard. It is the dirtiest and most insanitary spot in the homestead, its undressed surface being strewn with rubbish and with the dung or droppings of livestock, if the owner has any. One often sees human excrement in a corner, for young children and sick people defecate there at night. Ɔndieso is a very poor man, even by Tale standards, as the sagging roofs and dilapidated walls of his homestead lead one to suspect, possessing neither cattle nor sheep nor goats, and but a handful of poultry. Hence his *sapak* is very small, less than a dozen square yards in area. Ɔndieso's neighbour, the Gbizug tɛndaana, has a large *sapak*, about 80 square yards in area; but he has cattle, sheep, goats, and a couple of donkeys, not to speak of many fowls and guinea-fowls.

From the *sapak* one can see how the cylindrical rooms are laid out and distributed in the roughly circular or oval area occupied by the homestead. The first room, usually on the right as one enters through the *zanɔr*, is the *zɔŋ*. It is the only room with a doorway in the *sapak*, and it has a special significance in the structure of the house. It is the room *par excellence* of the head of the house (*yirdaana*), fittingly placed between the open space before the *zanɔr*, with which his public activities are associated, and the *sapak*, which shelters his most valuable possessions, his livestock. Cattle, sheep, and goats constitute material wealth, the repository of labour and thrift; but they mean much more than that to the Talɔŋ. They are pre-eminently the property of men, associated with men's major interests. They are the medium by means of which wives are acquired, and thus posterity assured. They are also the principal objects of sacrifice, by means of which the natives maintain their relations with their ancestor spirits and other mystical powers. In bad weather the *zɔŋ* itself is used to shelter the livestock. Inside the *zɔŋ*, along the wall, little cubicles are made for the *yirdaana*'s fowls to nest in. A man of substance often has a double *zɔŋ*, consisting of two chambers with a low doorway in the partition wall. The rear chamber is used as a stall for young calves or sheep, and the front chamber, communicating with the *sapak*, as a stall for a milch-cow or a donkey, for the night.

The *zɔŋ* is identified with the *yirdaana*'s status and social personality. It is a bare room, for a man does not keep valuable possessions, weapons,

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

or implements there. This is due partly to the values associated with it, partly to its use as a stall for livestock, and partly to its being an outside room from which things might easily be stolen. A young man like Ondieso has nothing but a couple of unimportant medicine horns stuck into the thatch, a log to sit on, and a few odds and ends in his rather tumbledown *zɔŋ*; for he makes little use of it. Yet the house would be incomplete without a *zɔŋ*; for the *zɔŋ* is the sanctuary of the *yirdaana*'s lineage-ancestor spirits. It is no profanation, in Tale eyes, to fold livestock there. The mundane and the mystical are complementary in Tale thought. Because the ancestor spirits abide there, a diviner holds his consultations in his *zɔŋ*. Among the Talis the lineage-shrine (*bɔɣar*) always rests inside or against the outer wall of the lineage head's *zɔŋ*; the Namoos generally keep such a shrine in an inside room or courtyard. Even if the other rooms of his homestead are thatched, a tendaana's *zɔŋ* must have a flat roof, because the spirits of his predecessors dwell there and the lineage *bɔɣar* and indoor shrines dedicated to the Earth are in it. The investiture of a tendaana culminates in his ritual induction into the *zɔŋ*, which is the final test of his acceptability to the ancestors and the Earth. A chief has a special *zɔŋ* (*zanto'o*), which is not only the sanctuary of the spirits of former chiefs but his council-chamber and the room in which he performs the rites that bless the community during the Great Festivals.

To an elder of great seniority in the lineage hierarchy his *zɔŋ* has a deeper value than to a man of junior status. A person's status is most conspicuously proclaimed at his or her death, when his or her social personality has to be cancelled by rite and ceremony. When a man of subordinate status in the lineage, a man who is not yet the master of his own house, or a young woman, dies, he or she is carried to the grave through a hole broken in the wall of the homestead for this purpose. But the head of a house, or an old woman, is carried out through a hole specially cut in the outside wall of the *zɔŋ*. '*Ti Talis tɛbhɔm nla*—This is the [great] honour of us, the Tallensi', an informant explained to me. The conventional idea of one who deserves it is that of a man or woman who leaves children and grandchildren to perpetuate his or her line and to celebrate his or her decease. When his homestead is being rebuilt, an old man often tells his sons, half-jocularly but with more than a hint of earnestness: 'Hurry up with the roofing of the *zɔŋ*. I might die, and I don't wish to be carried out through the gateway because the *zɔŋ* is unfinished.' 'May Heaven permit me to attain to lying in the *zɔŋ*, when I die, and forfend the breaking of the wall for me to be carried out' a young man once exclaimed fervently when he was talking about the funeral of a worthy elder. The last rites by which a dead person is finally aggregated to the ancestor spirits take place in the *zɔŋ*.

The *zɔŋ*, the *sapak*, and the *zanɔr* stand for the ideological and jural dominance of the male line of descent. Together, and in particular

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the *zɔŋ*, they symbolize the continuity of the lineage of which the master of that house is but one member, a link in a process to which he makes his greatest contribution as a father and head of a house. Hence the *zɔŋ* of a lineage head, being the sanctuary of all the lineage ancestors, is regarded as the *zɔŋ* of the whole lineage, and his *zanɔr* as the *zanɔr* of the lineage. When the Hill Talis were forcibly expelled in 1910–11 and their homesteads demolished, the heads of the maximal lineages later came back by stealth to rebuild a small part of their *zɔŋ* walls, for they could not appropriately sacrifice to their lineage ancestors elsewhere than in the lineage *zɔŋ*. If a woman commits adultery, she sins against her husband's lineage ancestors, thus imperilling the health and welfare of her husband and children. An adulteress, that is to say, transgresses the rights over her reproductive powers vested absolutely in her husband's lineage. Thus, if a woman is suspected of adultery she is subjected to the ordeal of entering (*kpe*) the lineage *zɔŋ* or *zanɔr*. She must face the ancestors directly, for she has committed an outrage against the lineage principle the absolute value of which is symbolized in and safeguarded by the ancestor spirits.[1] If she is guilty and does not confess, she will get ill and perhaps die. Women are terrified of this ordeal, which rarely fails to produce a confession.

Though they come and go freely in the *sapak* and *zɔŋ* in the ordinary course of domestic life, the women and children belong specifically to the domestic quarters proper. These lie behind a low wall (*ycbɔg*) a yard or so in height and about the same in length, at the back of the *sapak*. This wall usually runs between the back of a kitchen or storeroom and a large bullet-shaped chamber from 7 to 10 feet high and 6 to 10 feet in diameter at the base. This is the granary (*buur*). One suffices for a small family like Ondieso's. A wealthier man with a more numerous household may have one principal granary and one or more smaller ones. A granary has only one opening, at the top, covered with a lid of tightly plaited thatch like an enormous hat.

In the granary, again, Tale architecture embodies a fundamental element in the structure of the domestic unit. A bird's-eye view of a Tale homestead would show the principal granary as standing roughly in the centre of the circle of rooms, rising like a beacon between that section of the homestead which in use, thought, and feeling is the domain of the men, and that section which forms the living-quarters and is ruled by the women. The granary is the pivot on which the smooth working of the domestic unit turns. It holds the millet and guinea corn which provide the staple food of the natives. Without this, life cannot be satisfactorily sustained from one harvest to the next, and the household cannot exist, let alone keep its unity. What a sufficiency of food means to the Tallensi has been described in our previous

[1] This is the complementary notion to that of 'polluting the room' described above, p. 28.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

are the emblems of his individuality. They participate in it, for they are imbued with his body 'dirt (*dayət*)'—a concept which has a physiological facet, meaning the exuviae adhering to a man's garments, quiver, or other objects constantly handled by him, and a mystical facet implying the quintessence of his individuality. The Talis also acknowledge this complex association between a man and his granary and other intimate possessions, expressing it in analogous customs, in the routine of family life and in their ideals of family relations.

To enter the living-quarters of a homestead one climbs over the low dividing wall (*yɛbəg*) at the back of the *sapak* by means of a step (*bimbimər*) and descends, by a similar step on the other side, into an irregular courtyard (*dɛndɔŋo*, pl. *dɛndɔna*) of beaten gravel, which is surrounded by a number of rooms. According to the wealth, rank, or status of the *yirdaana* this *dɛndɔŋo* varies in size from about 20 to about 6 square yards.

This *dɛndɔŋo* belongs to the principal woman (*dugdaana*) of the house. The *dɛndɔna* of junior wives are smaller. In Ɔndieso's house the senior woman is his mother's surviving co-wife, whom he calls his 'younger mother' (*mapit*, lit. 'mother's younger sister'), and who has remained with him since the death of his father. Her rooms occupy roughly the left half of the homestead, facing inwards from the *sapak*. From this *dɛndɔŋo*, turning right between a small room beside the granary and a larger room straight ahead, one enters a similar *dɛndɔŋo* in the middle of another set of rooms, those of Ɔndieso's wife. These take up roughly the right half of the homestead, facing inwards. The *yirdaana*'s mother's (own mother, or proxy-mother) rooms always occupy the position of honour in the centre of the arc; his senior wife's (*poŋakpeem*) rooms lie on the right-hand side of these; his second wife's, or his younger brother's senior wife's rooms lie on the left, looking inwards. The rooms of the other wives of the head of the family or of his brothers are distributed as convenience dictates. For example, wives who are clan sisters will usually have adjoining quarters; wives who get on badly will be put in well-separated rooms. If none of a man's father's widows is living with him, and he has more than one wife, his senior wife occupies the central group of rooms, his second wife those on her right, and so forth. Generally the women's apartments all communicate with one another. But if a woman has a quarrelsome disposition or gets on badly with her co-wives for any other reason, her quarters will be separated from those of the next-door wife by a low party wall, to prevent undue trespassing by her co-wives or their children.

A woman's apartments make up a self-contained section in the homestead. This is her *dug* (pl. *dugət*). Basically *dug* means a single room, but it is extended to mean the single set of rooms belonging to one wife. In the Tale family every woman with children is entitled to her own *dug*. Women guard this right jealously, and if a man has not built separate quarters for his wife by the time that she has had her first child,

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

she will become very discontented. A young wife sometimes runs off to her father's home because she thinks she ought to have her own *dug* and her husband has been dilatory about it; and she will refuse to return until he convinces her of his intention to build her *dug* immediately. The observance of this rule is an essential element in the structure of the domestic family. It is indispensable for the satisfactory working of the domestic economy and for the mutual adjustment of person to person. A wife's separate quarters stand for her relative autonomy as wife, mother and housekeeper, *vis-à-vis* the other women of the family.

As the head of the house is *yirdaana*, master of the house, so the senior woman of the house—his mother, or senior wife—is the *dugdaana*, the mistress of the rooms. Every woman is the *dugdaana* of her own apartments, but the mistress of the principal *dug* is the *dugdaana* of the whole house.

In a polygynous family, or what might be called a multicellular family, the senior *dugdaana* has more authority in domestic affairs, and more esteem in the eyes of the public than the other women of the household have. Whether she is the *yirdaana*'s mother or his senior wife, she is the central pillar of his domestic establishment, honorifically more than actively in the case of the former, actively as well as honorifically in the case of the latter.

One sign of this is that most of the ancestor and medicine shrines that are kept indoors rest in the *dɛndɔŋo* and rooms of the senior woman. They include a man's personal shrines, as well as those of which he is custodian as head of a lineage segment. Sacrifice is offered to these shrines in this *dɛndɔŋo*, the women and children of the family often taking part. A man's ancestors keep watch and ward both indoors and out over the things, the place, and the people most precious to him.

When a person dies he or she must not only be gathered to the ancestors, but must subsequently be ritually brought back, as a spirit, into the living quarters, the veritable home. The expression '*Kpeehu la dugni*—bring him [her] into the *dug*', used for this as well as the customary rites, make this clear.

The intimate domestic life of a family goes on mainly in the *dɛndɔŋo*. Meals are often cooked and always eaten there. Food is never cooked outside the homestead except for ritual or ceremonial purposes. A woman does much of her domestic work in her *dɛndɔŋo*. Her babies learn to crawl and to take their first steps there. She entertains guests and relatives, and receives her daughter's suitors there. When the crops are harvested they are spread out to dry in the *dɛndɔŋo* before being stored. A man often sits about in his wife's *dɛndɔŋo* when he has a leisurely manual task in hand. Youths and girls come to dance there when an elderly person's funeral is celebrated. And on pleasant nights, after a satisfying meal, men, women, and children sit there conversing or gossiping or asking riddles.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

592 A woman is entitled to have at least three rooms in her *dug*, a sleeping-room (*dakir*) a dry-season kitchen (*da'aŋ*) and a storeroom (*da'aŋboog*). Men of substance often allow their older wives a fourth room (*boog*), which always has a flat mud roof and serves as an extra storeroom and a guest-room, or as a room in which a daughter-in-law can be temporarily accommodated, or where the *yirdaana* can sit and talk to his visitors in the rainy season.

342 592 [352] The *dakir* is the largest room, usually 10 to 12 feet in diameter.[1] Here the woman sleeps with her young children; here her husband comes to her at night; here she is confined when she bears him a child; here she keeps her sleeping-mats and her few personal treasures; and here, if she is his senior wife, her husband's best cloth or tunic, his bow and quiver, and other personal belongings. Her husband and children have free access to her *dakir*. Other members of the family must generally ask her permission to enter it or a family quarrel will result. To enter a *dakir* one crawls through an arched doorway, 2 to 3 feet high and about the same in width. Inside darkness reigns, relieved only by the glimmer of light that enters under the eaves and through the doorway, or a small aperture high up in the wall.

343 592 A stretch of wall 2 or 3 feet long forms a shallow recess between the *dakir* and the unroofed dry-season kitchen (*da'aŋ*). Here one generally sees a bundle of firewood stacked in a corner, or, in the right season, a heap of shea nuts. The *da'aŋ* itself is horseshoe-shaped and smaller than a *dakir*—from 4 to 8 feet across the shorter axis and 6 to 9 feet across the longer axis. The doorway is usually about 4 feet high, so that one can go in and out easily, as domestic tasks require. As it is for use in dry weather only, it is open to the sky. After the harvest, millet and guinea-corn stalks are spread on top, partly as a shield from the sun but chiefly as a reserve of firewood. The cooking-hearth (*ɔɔrəg*), the water-pots (*kɔwoor*), the cooking-pots and dishes (*dɔŋat* and *laas*), the stirring-stick (*vugər*), and ladles (*bies*), lying about in none too orderly a fashion, show well the uses to which this room is put.

Adjoining the *da'aŋ* is the larger, roofed *da'aŋboog*, the storeroom and larder. This room often has a doorway leading into the *da'aŋ* and not into the *dendɔŋɔ*, for the greater convenience of the housewife. Here the housewife keeps her stocks of foodstuffs—her dried vegetables and condiments, the odd piece of dried fish or meat she has hoarded, a pot of millet, perhaps, which she acquired by her own efforts, and so forth—as well as the utensils she is not using, and any bulky articles belonging to her or other members of the family. Here she also cooks in the wet season. At a pinch it may be used as a sleeping-room for a visitor

[1] The diameters of a room are always discrepant, it may be by an inch or two or by as much as a foot, so that its base is never a perfect circle. The natives themselves do not notice this as it is due to their crude method of marking out the circle for the base with the foot.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

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a. A senior wife takes care of her junior co-wives' infants while they are away at the water-hole

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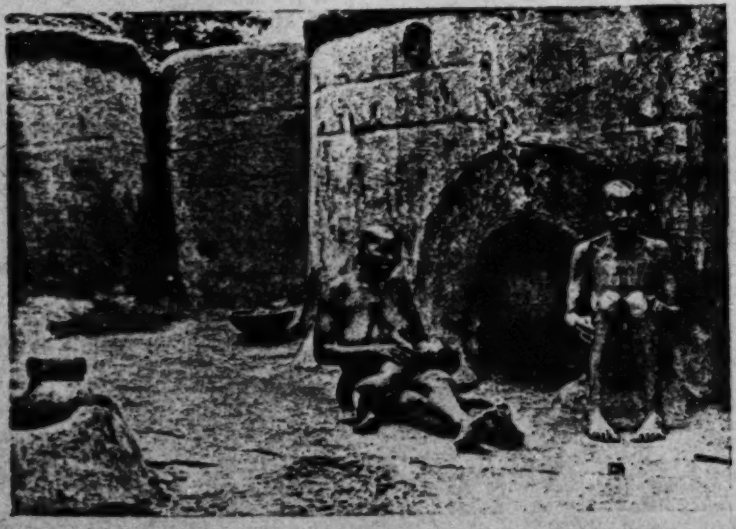

b. A pair of devoted co-wives. The younger woman (with her infant) is about 35, the elder about 63, their husband over 70. The older woman has a son of about 45

[facing p. 128]

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

male agnates. He is *yirdaan* by virtue of indisputable succession which carries with it ritual responsibilities for the whole joint family, legal and moral duties and rights and valuable economic privileges. His younger brothers and his sons share his dwelling as a rule, ortho-cousins or nephews occasionally. Everything depends on factors such as those previously enumerated when it comes to the constitution of a particular compound. But in general, genealogical distance imposes corresponding spatial and social arrangements. Thus, the secondary gate of a plural gate compound[1] is usually owned by an ortho-cousin or nephew (classificatory brother or son) of the *yirdaan*, except for the special case of a man's first-born son.[2]

The single dwelling or the single-gate compound is the habitation of one or more households, each consisting of an adult male, his wife (or wives), and his children. A householder may have younger unmarried brothers or sisters or an old mother dependent on him. Every married man is a householder, but households vary greatly in status according to their degree of social and economic differentiation within the joint family. This is determined not only by the stage of development it has reached, but also by kinship factors and by those individual social and psychological characteristics which we have referred to before. A newly married man, for example, is to all intents and purposes part of the household to which he was attached prior to his marriage, but he has a small degree of autonomy which increases from year to year.

A newly married wife has a room in the quarters of her husband's mother, if she is alive, or of his senior wife. In due course, however, whether it be a man's first or later wife, he must build her separate quarters. Hence, in a well-differentiated household every wife has her own quarters (*dug*) partitioned off from those of her co-wives or her mother-in-law. Here she and her children—the primary family—live, and here she is supreme mistress. A woman's quarters consists

[1] Two gates are usual, three gates infrequent, and more than three gates found only in exceptional circumstances.

[2] It is taboo for the head of a compound and his first-born son to continue to use a single entrance after the latter has married and founded a family, though this taboo is never enforced until the younger man's children approach adolescence. But few men live long enough to see their first-born sons make their own gateways.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of sleeping-rooms and kitchens (to be described later) distributed roughly in a semicircle round an open space, 10 to 15 feet across, bounded on one side by a co-wife's quarters or a low partitioning wall. This little close (*dendɔŋo*) is the central place in the life of the family. Here it takes its meals in the dry season; here friends are received; here most of the routine of family life goes on. A man's principal ancestor shrines are kept in his mother's or senior wife's *dendɔŋo*; and there he performs many of the frequently recurring rites of the ancestor cult. The women of a single household have adjacent quarters. Their husband's mother or the senior wife occupies the central quarters; junior wives or son's wives are on either side of her, forming altogether a rough circle or segment of a circle. A householder who is not also head of the compound has no room of his own. He keeps his private possessions in his senior wife's sleeping-room. Apart from this, it is the cardinal principle of family life that a man must divide his time, his affection, and his supplies of food with absolute impartiality between his wives.

Within the compound two other kinds of rooms are of special importance for our theme, the granaries and the grinding-rooms. Every independent agricultural unit has its own granaries which are said to belong to the head of the unit. His granary (*boor*) is a man's most private and personal possession. No woman may enter it, nor any man not directly authorized by the owner. Ritual prohibitions associated with it closely identify a man's granary with his social personality. As one informant put it, with a flash of insight, 'Your granary is like your soul'.

One or more grinding-rooms (*neer*) belongs to every well-differentiated household. These are discussed later.

The family structure thus outlined is the basis of a domestic economy and of a configuration of moral, legal, religious, and personal relationships which can best be described as a compromise between strong centralizing or integrating tendencies and powerful differentiating tendencies. In the domestic economy of food, our sole concern in this paper, every unit in the system is completely autonomous in some respects and dependent upon a more comprehensive unit in others. It is a fluctuating compromise, slowly changing. Births, deaths, marriages, and their social consequences, even the mere lapse